

developments, so that they better reflect species-specific needs. To achieve this, the authors encourage zoos to take advantage of the growth of interest in animal welfare science at universities through greater collaboration.

Despite the many important points raised by the above, it is likely that the section of this informative and worthwhile addition to the Handbook that will be referred to most often is Appendix 2, which outlines the animal welfare audit systems of the Zoological Society of London and of Chester Zoo and which gives examples of the documentation used by both.

Chapter 4. Animal welfare and its assessment in zoos. Addendum to Zoos Forum Handbook (September 2005). Produced by the Zoos Forum. 79 pp A4 loose. Published and available from the Global Wildlife Division of Defra, 1/16 Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EB, UK; telephone 0117 3728686; website: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zoosforum/handbook/index.htm

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Recommendations on the use of snares in the UK

As part of a review of the use of snares, the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published a Code of Practice on the *Use of Snares in Fox and Rabbit Control* in October 2005. Based on the principle that snares and traps should remain available to land managers as a legal method of dealing with particular species, this review is the first of the area in the UK since the introduction of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. Also published at this time were two related reports: from the Independent Working Group on Snares (IWGS), set up to identify and address areas of practice of particular concern regarding the use of traps and snares and to produce recommendations to improve their humane use, and the UK Government's action plan published in response to the IWGS report, which includes details of future research priorities in the area.

In the UK, snares are used as a means of restraining an animal prior to its dispatch, rather than as the primary means of killing it. The new Code of Practice details the legal obligations for people using snares in England and Wales, and gives specific guidance on the siting, setting and subsequent inspection of snares. As stated in the Code, section 11 of the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act requires that when setting a snare it must be free running, ie it must relax when the animal stops pulling, and forbids the use of self-locking snares, which continue to tighten by a ratchet action as the animal struggles. The Code also states that snares must only be set at sites likely to be used by the species that is to be controlled and that care must be taken to avoid areas where there is evidence of regular non-target species usage. To aid with this requirement, information on how to detect and distinguish between usage by different species is listed. Additionally, to reduce the chances of the target animal detecting the presence of a snare, the Code gives guidance on how to prepare a snare, recommending

that it is boiled prior to use to reduce its odour and that, subsequently, any exposure to human or other strong odours through handling or other contact is minimised. Once set, it is recommended that a snare is checked twice per day, ideally at dawn and dusk, and humane methods of dispatch of any rabbit or fox snared are detailed. Also detailed, is species-specific advice on how the legal requirement that non-target species that have been caught be immediately released might best be achieved.

The element of the Code that is likely to have the most far-reaching impact, however, is the establishment of the principle of carrying out a cost/benefit analysis prior to the deployment of any snare. It suggests that this analysis should seek to assess the need to control the population, the humaneness of the method of control and the probable welfare impact on the target species, and possible risks to non-target species of the use of snares. Whilst such analyses have been required for some time in other areas of UK legislation, eg relating to the use of animals in scientific procedures, the recommendation that this principle be used in the area of wildlife management is new, and one that may prove to be influential. Anyone seeking further guidance on how to carry out such an assessment is directed, however, not to the Defra Code of Practice — which omits this guidance — but to section 3 of the Independent Welfare Group on Snares report from which it came.

The IWGS report also contains recommendations relating to amendments to legislation and areas of further research. Legal amendments suggested include: making it a requirement to use a stop on a snare and to remove or dispatch a snared animal immediately on their detection, and the rewording of the section of the Wildlife and Countryside Act that concerns the frequency of inspection of snares. With respect to research, further research on the use of snares, especially on the scale of their use in trapping rabbits, on their impact on welfare — on both target and non-target species — and on improving their design was called for. Amongst the other areas highlighted was the need for more research into novel humane control methods.

Responding to the IWGS report and its recommendations, the Defra action plan is generally supportive and indicates that some of the proposed legislative changes are already being addressed and that work with the IWGS will continue to ensure the recommendations are reflected in the on-going review of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. In addition, when priorities for future wildlife management research are reviewed, it seems likely that funds will be made available to carry out a survey of the use of snares in the UK and for an assessment of the humaneness of the use of snares. Funds will also be directed towards increasing the take up of places on training courses on the use of snares.

Defra Code of Practice on the Use of Snares in Fox and Rabbit Control; Defra snares action plan; Report of the Independent Working Group on Snares (All October 2005). Published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 14 pp, 7 pp, 101 pp, respectively. Copies of these reports are available from Wildlife Management Policy, Room 1/09A, Defra,

Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Bristol BS1, UK. Email: WildlifeIntegrationConservationTeam@defra.gsi.gov.uk or from the Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/snares/index.htm

Information on the Review of Part I of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/wildlifeact-part1/index.htm>

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Guidance on the slaughter of injured cattle in the EU

From 1 January 2006, new EU Hygiene Regulations come into force that change the way which animals slaughtered or killed because of concerns about their welfare can be dealt with. As only healthy and clean animals can now be accepted for slaughter, the new regulations mean that the ultimate destination of such animals, killed because of injury, disease or illness, will be determined by animal welfare and food safety considerations. Decisions will have to be taken both as to whether an animal that is injured or shows other signs of abnormalities fulfils public health conditions for slaughter for human consumption and whether it is fit to be transported to a slaughterhouse, or emergency slaughtered in situ and then transported. In many cases, the decision will be that such animals are not eligible for human consumption and must instead be dealt with as fallen stock.

The British Cattle Veterinary Association, with assistance from the Food Standards Agency, UK Rural Affairs Department and the Meat Hygiene Service, have produced guidance to help veterinary surgeons and farmers make such decisions and arrive at a course of action. Key to the guidance is the ability to demonstrate that any animal for human consumption is or was healthy prior to slaughter, or to the event that brought about the need for slaughter. This includes the need to ensure that the statutory withdrawal period for any veterinary medicine, including anthelmintics, has been observed for the animal. Confirmation of health status through both ante and post mortem inspection by a veterinary surgeon or OVS is now a necessity.

In addition, the guidance notes draw attention to the fact that in the UK, under the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997, unfit cattle may only be transported to the nearest available place for veterinary treatment or diagnosis, or to the nearest available place of slaughter, and only if the animal is not likely to be subject to unnecessary suffering by reason of its unfitness. The Guide seeks to further clarify this requirement and advises that any animal suffering pain, which cannot be loaded without undue force, or with severe wounds or protruding viscera, eg prolapsed uterus, must therefore not be transported. This advice similarly holds for any animal that is unable to bear weight on all four limbs, or that may suffer unnecessary pain during transport as a result of its lameness, or for which transport is likely to cause pain. If in any doubt, the guide advises, the animal is best not transported.

Once it has been determined that an animal cannot be transported, a decision has to be made whether the animal is

eligible for emergency slaughter outside a slaughterhouse for human consumption. The Guide indicates that a veterinary surgeon must be involved ante-mortem in this decision, and also must be present at the time of slaughter. It states that it is the veterinary surgeons responsibility to determine whether the slaughter is the result of an emergency (ie an event requiring immediate action) or accident (ie an unforeseen or unexpected event), whether it was healthy prior to the accident and whether it fulfils the ante-mortem conditions — including those that it be free of disease or conditions that may be transmitted to humans or animals through handling or eating the meat. They must also issue a declaration to accompany the animal to the slaughterhouse indicating that the animal was healthy and fit for consumption. For cattle over 24 months, there is also a requirement that a Brain Stem Sample has been taken for testing for BSE. Failure to do so, the Guide warns, will render the animal ineligible for inclusion in the food chain. The Guide then finishes by giving advice on methods of emergency slaughter, along with examples of the information that must accompany an animal for slaughter, that is known or suspected to be injured or showing abnormality including veterinary and owner declarations, and a decision tree on how to determine the appropriate action to be taken.

Some have expressed concern that the new rules may, because of associated costs of dealing with sick and injured animals, lead to delays and welfare problems in some cases as a result.

Guidance for Veterinary Surgeons and Farmers on the Slaughter of Cattle Which Are Injured Or Showing Signs Of Abnormalities (September 2005). Published by the British Cattle Veterinary Association. 24 pp. Copies are available on request from the BCVA Office, The Green, Frampton on Severn, Gloucestershire GL2 7EP, UK, or can be downloaded by BCVA members from their website: <http://www.bcva.org.uk>

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Implementation of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS), which received full Government support in May 2004 after 5 years in development by the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW), is now in the early stages of implementation. The Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) approved the Strategy in 2004, and in the 2005-06 Budget the Australian Government committed \$6 million over four years to fund a plan for its implementation. This is being coordinated by the Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC), and in September '05 a national workshop involving 100 stakeholders agreed on a National Implementation Plan. In addition, six working groups for the six key sectors involved with animal welfare (livestock/production animals; animals used in research and teaching; aquatic animals; companion animals; animals used for work, sport, recreation or display; and animals in the wild) were agreed, which will develop Action Plans for each.

The Strategy is based on the existing framework for animal welfare in Australia, but aims to refine it to ensure there is